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Avalanche Week, part 1 of 5: How the death of seven teenagers near the B.C.-Alberta border in 2003 changed everything

AFTER THE SLIDE

PAGES 8 & 9

In this file photo taken in January 2012, an avalanche descends on Snow Gulch Creek during avalanche control by the Department of Transportation in Juneau, Alaska. Over the next five days, Metro will look at all things avalanches — the tragedy, the risk, the rescuers, the tools to stay alive and the ways families are moving beyond their grief.

MICHAEL PENN/THE JUNEAU EMPIRE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canucks can't fend off red-hot Sharks

Vancouver is the latest casualty of San Jose's unbeaten start to the season PAGE 19

Golden eagle

Remember that student video of a fake eagle snatching a baby in Montreal? It turns out the hoax was no joke when it came to raising money for a school PAGE 11

Inferno kills more than 200 in Brazil

A fire broke out at a nightclub packed with students, leaving revellers trapped inside PAGE 6

Sit down and tuck in

Frittata with smoked salmon, cream cheese and dill works for any meal PAGE 17

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Real estate

Record year for new rental units

Rental-housing starts certainly aren't as popular as condos, condos, condos among developers, but the cheaper units are on the rise in Vancouver after a decade of little growth.

The city approved 1,021 new rental units in 2012, up from zero in 2008 and 2009 and an average of 328 in 2011 and 2010, according to a city news release.

It's welcome news for those in need of affordable housing in a city where 52 per cent of households rent from an inventory that is "aging and in need of repair," Mayor Gregor Robertson said in a statement.

"We know from the low vacancy rates that there is huge demand for new rentals, which is why city hall is focused on getting new rental housing built as a way to address our city's affordable-housing challenge," Robertson said.

Whereas a healthy rental market typically has a vacancy rate of three to four per cent, Vancouver's rate is anywhere from 0.7 to 1.6 per cent, leaving renters with inadequate choice.

And renting a one-bedroom unit is 37 per cent cheaper than renting a condo, according to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The approved new units include a 186-unit tower in the West End — the first tower built in the neighbourhood in more than a decade — a 614-unit project near Rogers Arena, and a variety of smaller projects.

The city also issued 350 laneway housing permits and 442 secondary-suite permits.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

B.C. teachers. Bargaining round to start

Despite an announcement from the premier that threatened to derail negotiations, B.C. teachers and their employer ratified a framework for this round of bargaining.

The BC Teachers' Federation and the BC Public School Employers' Association agreed on a timeline, to split the cost of a facilitator, to develop a common data study, and which issues will be negotiated locally versus provincially.

"It's a significant step in the right direction, a productive move that will help facilitate negotiations," BCTF union president Susan Lambert said in a statement.

Susan Lambert MATT KIELTYKA/METRO FILE

The move is a "positive start" that shows "good will on both sides," Lambert said, as the teachers and the Liberal government try to reach an agreement before the next school year.

Talks are scheduled to begin on Feb. 4. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Massive fire. Vancouver warehouse gutted

Dozens of firefighters were called in to battle a three-alarm fire at a vacant warehouse on Terminal Avenue Sunday morning.

Fire crews were still dealing with "hot spots" six hours after a blaze engulfed a two-storey warehouse — most recently operated by North-West Produce — at 730 Terminal Avenue, said Capt. Gabe Roder.

The call came in at around 6 a.m., and firefighters were forced to fight the blaze outside as the fire intensified, he added.

"We also brought in some heavy machinery to tear down the existing structures, what's left of it," Roder said.

Rogers said there were no injuries and the cause of the fire has not been determined at this time.

"It's a very difficult process because there isn't a lot left of the building," he said.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Joint effort

Three different fire stations and up to 40 firefighters were called in to help fight the blaze.

Councillor hopes to save building's heritage

Canada Post. Coun. Jang pushing for new owners to preserve aspects of building

LIAM BRITTEN
vancouver@metronews.ca

Amid growing concerns Vancouver is losing its heritage sites, Coun. Kerry Jang is optimistic about development possibilities for the Canada Post building on Hamilton Street.

While heritage organizations were fretting over the building's sale to B.C. Investment Management Corporation, Jang said the redevelopment could be a positive for Vancouver if the developer follows through on their plans to turn it into a mixed-use site heavy on commercial space — and takes the city's concerns about the building's heritage value seriously.

"They're going to have to work closely with us," Jang said. "We have to determine what parts have heritage value and see how that can be incorporated into the design of the building."

Jang mentioned the building's facade and stone reliefs as elements the city may insist the developers preserve. He said initial conversations with the developers suggested they are willing to do that, but no formal proposals have been received by the city.

Jang sounded excited about the possibility of addressing the short supply of business real estate downtown.

"Certainly there is a shortage of office and commercial space in downtown Vancouver, and here's an opportunity to put some up," Jang said.

The Canada Post building in Downtown Vancouver has been sold, but the city wants to keep its iconic facade. LIAM BRITTEN/FOR METRO

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New gadget. Lock your bike problems away

Tired of carrying your bike locks around? Vancouver's Adrian Solgaard Janzen says his invention will put security issues of bike owners under lock and key.

The 26-year-old designed an integrated bicycle lock after his bike was stolen in August. The InterLock has two retractable cables that are long enough to secure the rear wheel to a post or bike rack. The cables are tucked inside the seat post.

"When you go for a bike ride, you don't want to think about carrying your bike lock and just want to go for a bike ride and enjoy the sunshine," Janzen said on Sunday.

He is raising production funds through the online crowd-sourcing platform Kickstarter. The goal is to reach $48,000 by Feb. 5. As of Sunday, he had raised more than $32,000.

He plans to pitch InterLock to CBC's Dragon's Den when the show holds auditions in Vancouver this spring.

Adrian Solgaard Janzen is trying to market his InterLock. CONTRIBUTED

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Name not released

Woman dies after hitting pole

A 26-year-old woman is dead after a car she was driving hit a light pole on Cambie Street early Saturday. Police believe speed was a factor in the crash.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Police investigation

Skeleton unearthed

RCMP are investigating after a human skeleton was found by a surveying crew on Saturday in a marsh in Richmond. Police said they believe the bones have been there for some time.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Province to cull invasive owls to preserve at-risk species

Endangered species. Habitat of northern spotted owl being overtaken by aggressors

The province has approved the shooting of one species of owl in a last-ditch effort to save their endangered cousins, as the number of northern spotted owls continues to decline, decades after they became the mascot of the "War in the Woods" over old-growth logging.

Northern spotted owls are on the brink of extinction in Canada, with only 10 birds remaining in the wild in southwestern B.C., according to some estimates.

The situation is so grave that over the past five years the B.C. forests and lands ministry has relocated 73 and authorized the shooting of 39 barred owls, the larger and more aggressive bird encroaching on the spotted owls' limited habitat.

"Barred owls have invaded all spotted-owl habitat," said Ian Blackburn, the provincial government's spotted-owl recovery co-ordinator.

Relocation or elimination of barred owls is limited to a five-kilometre radius around areas where spotted owls have recently been confirmed, or areas being considered for reintroduction from a captive breeding program.

"Without this, it is likely that the wild population would be extirpated before we have sufficient captive-bred young to release — which would significantly hurt the chances of survival for the released birds," Blackburn said.

Preliminary results show that up to 13 new spotted owls — eight adult and five young — were discovered within nine of 17 sites where barred-owl removals occurred, he said.

"While none of us like the idea of killing (barred owls), we all agreed that if the goal continues to be the recovery of the (spotted owl), then it is a necessary and potentially effective tool," says a 2011 internal email between members of the provincial spotted-owls recovery team, obtained by the conservation group the Wilderness Committee under freedom of information.

The northern spotted owl is on the verge of extinction in Canada. This owl, named Obsidian by U.S. Forest Service staff, was photographed in 2003 in the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon. DON RYAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Due largely to loss of habitat from old-growth logging, spotted owls were on the brink of extinction by the 1980s when they became the mascot of the environmental movement.

As loggers and protesters clashed in the woods, the bird was listed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in 1986 and red-listed in B.C. in 1989.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Nightclub blaze kills over 230

Santa Maria, Brazil. Wall of bodies and toxic smoke prevented revellers from escaping

A fast-moving fire roared through a crowded, windowless nightclub in southern Brazil early Sunday, filling the air in seconds with flames and a thick, toxic smoke that killed more than 230 panicked partygoers, many of whom were caught in a stampede to escape.

Inspectors believe the blaze began when a band's small pyrotechnics show ignited foam sound-insulating material on the ceiling, releasing a putrid haze that caused scores of university students to choke to death. Most victims died from inhalation rather than burns.

Firefighters responding to the blaze initially had trouble getting inside the Kiss nightclub because "there was a barrier of bodies blocking the entrance," Guido Pedroso Melo, commander of the city's fire department, told the O Globo newspaper.

Authorities said band members who were on the stage when the fire broke out later confirmed they used pyrotechnics during their show.

Police inspector Sandro Meinerz, who co-ordinated the investigation at the nightclub, said one band member died after escaping because he returned inside the burning building to save his accordion.

"It was terrible inside ... bodies piled atop one another," said Meinerz. "We had to use trucks to remove them. It took about six hours to take the bodies away."

Police Maj. Cleberson Braida Bastianello said by telephone that the toll has risen to 233. He said earlier that the disaster was likely made worse because the nightclub appeared to have just one exit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Friends and family mourn over one of the hundreds of bodies brought to a gym for identification. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Italian fascism

Mussolini 'did good': Berlusconi

Former Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi praised Benito Mussolini for "having done good" despite the dictator's anti-Jewish laws, sparking outrage as Europe held Holocaust remembrances on Sunday.

Berlusconi also defended Mussolini for allying with Hitler, saying he likely reasoned it would be better to be on the winning side.

Berlusconi added that "within this alliance came the imposition of the fight against, and the extermination of, the Jews. Thus, the racial laws are the worst fault of Mussolini, who, in so many other aspects, did good."

Italian laws forbid the defence of fascism. A candidate for local elections pledged to have Berlusconi prosecuted. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World powers speak on the Holocaust

A memorial ceremony at Raoul Wallenberg Square in Stockholm, Sweden. LEIF R JANSSON, SCANPIX SWEDEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holocaust survivors, politicians, religious leaders and others marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Sunday with solemn prayers and the now oft-repeated warnings to never let such horrors happen again.

Pope Benedict XVI, speaking from his window at St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, advocated constant vigilance.

"The memory of this immense tragedy ... must represent for everyone a constant warning so that the horrors of the past are not repeated, so that every form of hatred and racism is overcome and that respect for, and dignity of, every human person is encouraged," the German-born pontiff said.

U.S. President Barack Obama said in a statement that "the United States, along with the international community, resolves to stand in the way of any tyrant or dictator who commits crimes against humanity and stay true to the principle of 'Never Again.'"

As every year, Holocaust survivors gathered in the Polish winter at Auschwitz — but they shrink in number each year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lost plane. Bodies to stay in Antarctica for a time

Officials have called off efforts to recover the bodies of three Canadians after a plane crash in Antarctica, saying it would be unsafe to further disturb the wreckage.

One of the agencies investigating the deadly crash says poor winter weather will delay the recovery operation until the next Antarctic research season, which coincides with the region's period of 24-hour sunlight.

Peter West of the U.S. National Science Foundation says rescue crews have retrieved some equipment from the aircraft, including the cockpit voice recorder, which should help authorities learn about what caused the crash.

The New Zealand Rescue Co-Ordination Centre has said the aircraft appears to have been on course but may have turned too early while flying through a mountain range.

The plane is operated by Calgary-based Kenn Borek Air and was reported missing after it failed to reach its destination on Wednesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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THE AVALANCHE THAT

Metro's Avalanche Week

The first in a five-part series

"Avalanche!"

The desperate warning comes as a skier helplessly watches a massive wall of snow cascade towards 14 students, two teachers and a chaperon. But it was too late to get out of the slide's path.

Feb. 1, 2003. Seven students, all 15 years old, died that day in B.C.'s Connaught Creek.

A decade after the most devastating avalanche season on record, the natural phenomenon continues to instil fear, intrigue, curiosity and awe.

The sheer spectacle — and danger — of avalanches remains the same, but much has changed since 2003.

Follow Metro all week as we delve into avalanche safety's darkest day and its lasting legacy on the nation.

We'll bring you stories of personal tragedy and survival, along with in-depth looks at the individuals and institutions working on the front line to keep people safe as more and more people venture into Western Canada's stunning wilderness.

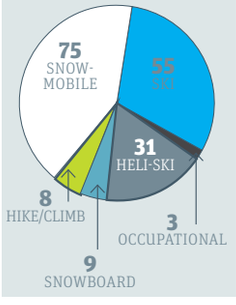
DAY 1

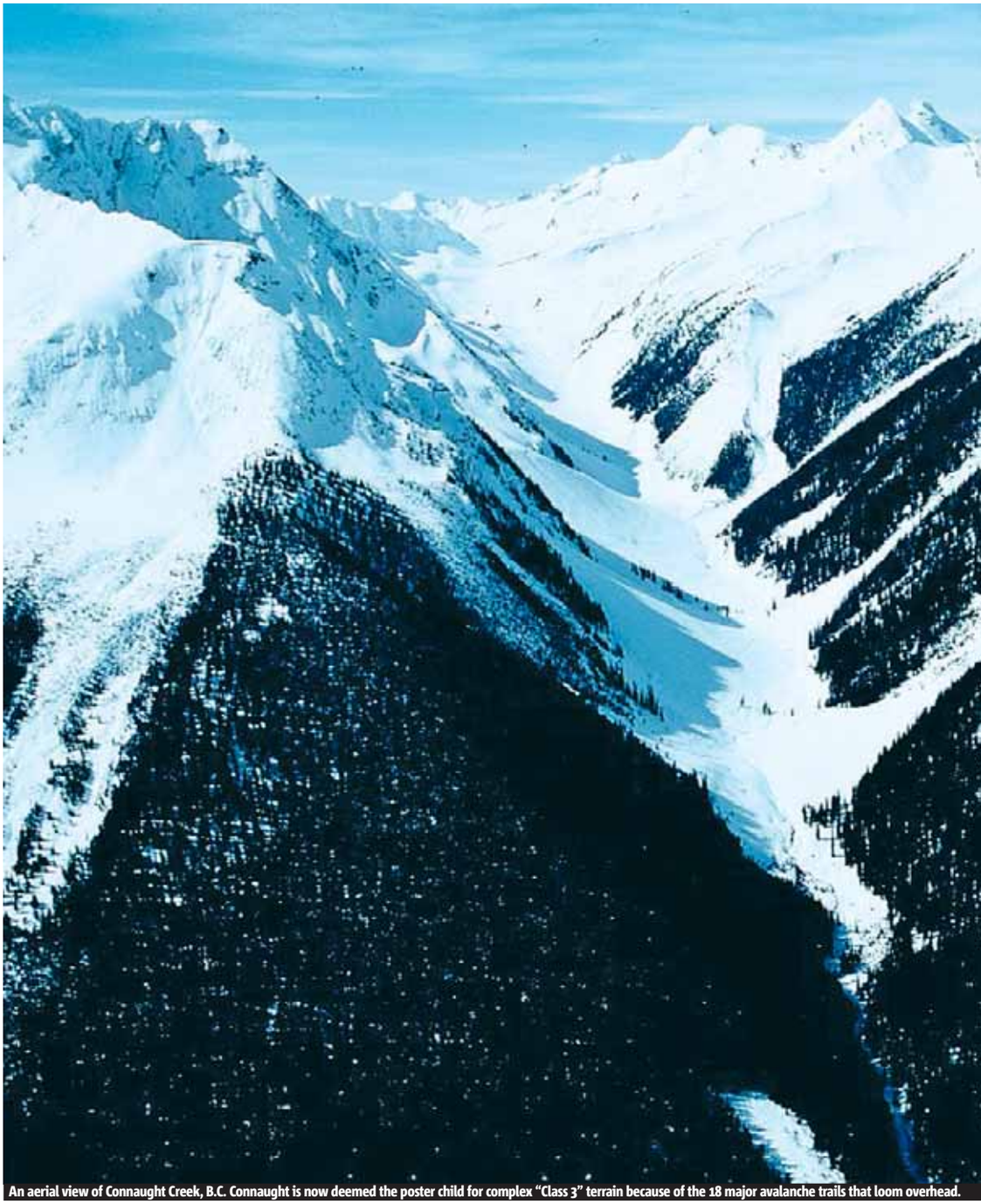
THE TRAGEDY

Tomorrow: The Risk
The call of the wild and its sometimes deadly nature.

B.C. deaths by activity: '96 - '12

SOURCE: B.C. CORONERS SERVICE





An aerial view of Connaught Creek, B.C. Connaught is now deemed the poster child for complex "Class 3" terrain because of the 18 major avalanche trails that loom overhead.

Impetus for change

The deadliest avalanche season on record forced Parks Canada to reform the country's avalanche safety systems.

The winter of 2002/2003 claimed the lives of 29 people (25 in British Columbia).

The most shocking incident was the deaths of the seven students in Connaught Creek

"It was a huge shakeup," said Grant Statham, a mountain risk specialist hired by Parks Canada to implement 36 recommendations in the aftermath of the slide.

Parks Canada developed world-leading public avalanche and terrain bulletins, provincial and federal governments got involved in funding programs, signage at parks were ramped up, and regulations were put in place dictating where supervised groups of youth could, and could not, access.

The recommendations also led to the creation of the Canadian Avalanche Centre, one of the lasting legacies of the 2002/2003 season.

The changes, unprecedented in scope, were born out of a deep collective pain and the desire to prevent future tragedies.

Quoted

"It was definitely a watershed moment for public avalanche safety."

Grant Statham, mountain risk specialist for Parks Canada

"One of the most important things was having the parents (of victims) involved," he said. "That was very tough, to work with someone that was grieving so much. There were a lot of fingers being pointed at us."

But it was worth it.

Many of the advances in Canada, such as the avalanche danger scale and icons, have since been universally adopted around the world.

Avalanche fatality rates remain fairly steady (averaging around 10 a year in B.C.) even though backcountry use has grown exponentially.

"2003 has affected us deeply," said Statham. "It was a terrible event. But out of that, a lot of good has been done in the 10 years since."

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Scott Broshko

Michael Shaw

Marissa Staddon

Jeff Tricket

CHANGED EVERYTHING

CONTRIBUTED/PARKS CANADA

Seven students dead.

Grief pushed parents to fight for better standards

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

For decades, a ski trip along Connaught Creek trail near B.C.'s majestic Rogers Pass was the crown jewel of the school's renowned outdoor education program.

On Feb. 1, 2003, Grade 10 student Daniel Arato was to follow in the tracks of his older brother who a few years before safely completed the overnight trip, run by the prestigious Okotoks, Alta.-based Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School.

But in just four seconds that Saturday morning, an avalanche barrelled into the valley as the group crossed, resulting in a tragedy that would forever change Canada's approach to avalanche safety.

Daniel and six other students, all 15 years old, lost their lives.

Seven of their peers, two teachers and one volunteer leader survived, largely due to the immediate rescue efforts from a husband and wife pair of mountain guides who happened to witness the avalanche from a nearby slope. All were buried or partially buried under snow the coroner described as "like concrete" in the area's largest avalanche in 25 years.

The tragedy rocked the community as devastated families, friends and teachers grappled with the enormous loss: How could this happen to a group that was equipped with the right gear, well-organized, educated in avalanche safety and on a path that hundreds traverse annually?

Daniel's parents, Peter and Judith Arato, say the school, Parks Canada and they, as parents, simply didn't understand or appropriately address the risks associated with the backcountry.

"You send your kids to school, and I think as parents we intrinsically trust that school is not taking any risks with your children," Judith said in an interview, her voice pausing only when she recounted the moment she learned of the accident. "They didn't themselves recognize they were playing Russian roulette with the children's lives."

In the decade since the tragedy, the Aratos' grief pushed them to work with Parks Canada to change the mindset from the "Enter at your own risk" signs posted at national park entrances to a culture of safety.

And though safety improvements won't bring back their son or his classmates Ben Albert, Scott Broshko, Alex Pattillo, Michael Shaw, Marissa Staddon and Jeff Trickett, the considerable safety changes are rewarding.

"We'd be disappointed if there was a tragedy and no one did anything," Judith said.

Snowshoers head into Seymour Provincial Park Jan. 20, where avalanche signage is impossible to miss.
JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

From 'enter at your own risk' to a culture of safety

Adjustment in mindset

It was not acceptable to the Aratos that seven deaths were considered within the "normal" range during avalanche season.

"Every year if we had seven kids dying, would that be OK?" Peter questioned Parks Canada in the months that followed. "You need to work on getting the mindset to change."

Parks Canada agreed, and 10 years after the deadliest winter for recreational backcountry users on record, there is a culture of safety in place.

Parks Canada revamped the way risk is measured, rated terrain on its complexity and created separate rules for custodial groups. And any group of children not under parental custody will never traverse the highly complex Connaught Creek trail again.

The Aratos and the other parents never called for the cancellation of the outdoor education program, but an independent report on the Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School program by consultant Ross Cloutier in June 2003 recommended changes.

He found that it had become more "adventure" than "outdoor" education. Though he concluded most recreation, commercial and school groups would likely have skied that day, the real question was how much risk a school is willing to take.

The program now accepts a lower level of risk, outdoor education director Bruce Hendricks said.

The school holds extensive briefings for parents, updated its emergency response protocol and holds trip debriefings to seek continuous improvement.

Hendricks gets a dozen requests a year from schools looking to emulate the program, which was accredited by the Association for Experiential Education last year.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Exclusively online

Judith and Peter Arato
CANDICE WARD/FOR METRO

The Aratos were shocked by what they saw when they took a helicopter ride over Connaught Creek after the accident. Listen to their story at metronews.ca/features/avalanche-week.

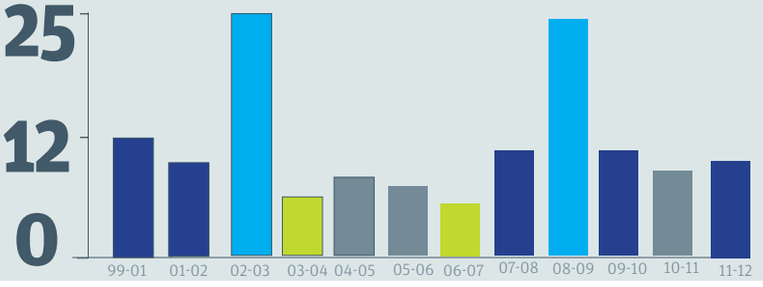
Ben Albert

Alex Pattillo

Daniel Arato

Avalanche deaths in B.C. between 1999 and 2012.

SOURCE: B.C. CORONERS SERVICE



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Fake eagle snatches baby! Funds design scholarship!

A video produced by students at Montreal's Centre NAD appears to show a massive bird plucking an infant off the ground. The school, which teaches 3D animation and digital design, says the project has generated enough money from its views on YouTube to fund a scholarship. YOUTUBE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Going viral

- Many people treated the hoax video as the real deal. It had only been on YouTube for 30 minutes before it got its first Reddit comment, and then the Twittersphere lit up. Within three hours of it being posted, mainstream media in Quebec, Australia and the United Kingdom picked it up.
- As people began realizing the video was a hoax, the students were bombarded with interview requests.

Profitable hoax. Viral video wasn't real, but its YouTube views have generated solid cash for Montreal school

A baby-stealing fake eagle is helping a deserving student take flight. The viral video of the eagle, created by students at Montreal's Centre NAD, has received international media attention and had more than 41 million views on YouTube since it was posted on Dec. 18. The minute-long video purported to show an eagle swooping down and grabbing a toddler in its talons at a Montreal park.

And the school says it's also generated a few bucks that will go toward a scholarship for a deserving student at the 3D animation and digital design school. School spokeswoman Claude Arsenault says the amount of the scholarship hasn't been determined because the cheque hasn't yet arrived from Google, YouTube's owner.

The school and the students who made the video can't profit from it because it was made with software bought under an educational licence. Arsenault said the AdSense account with YouTube wasn't even created until some time after it had been initially posted as the school ensured it could do it in accordance with its licences.

Putting the money to a good cause is fine with the video's creators, who were rewarded with a grade of A+ for their work on the class project. THE CANADIAN PRESS

BB10 launch. Can RIM get its groove back?

Once a leader but now derided as a laggard, BlackBerry-maker Research In Motion hopes to regain the confidence of cynical smartphone users this week as the curtain is lifted on its much-anticipated new smartphones.

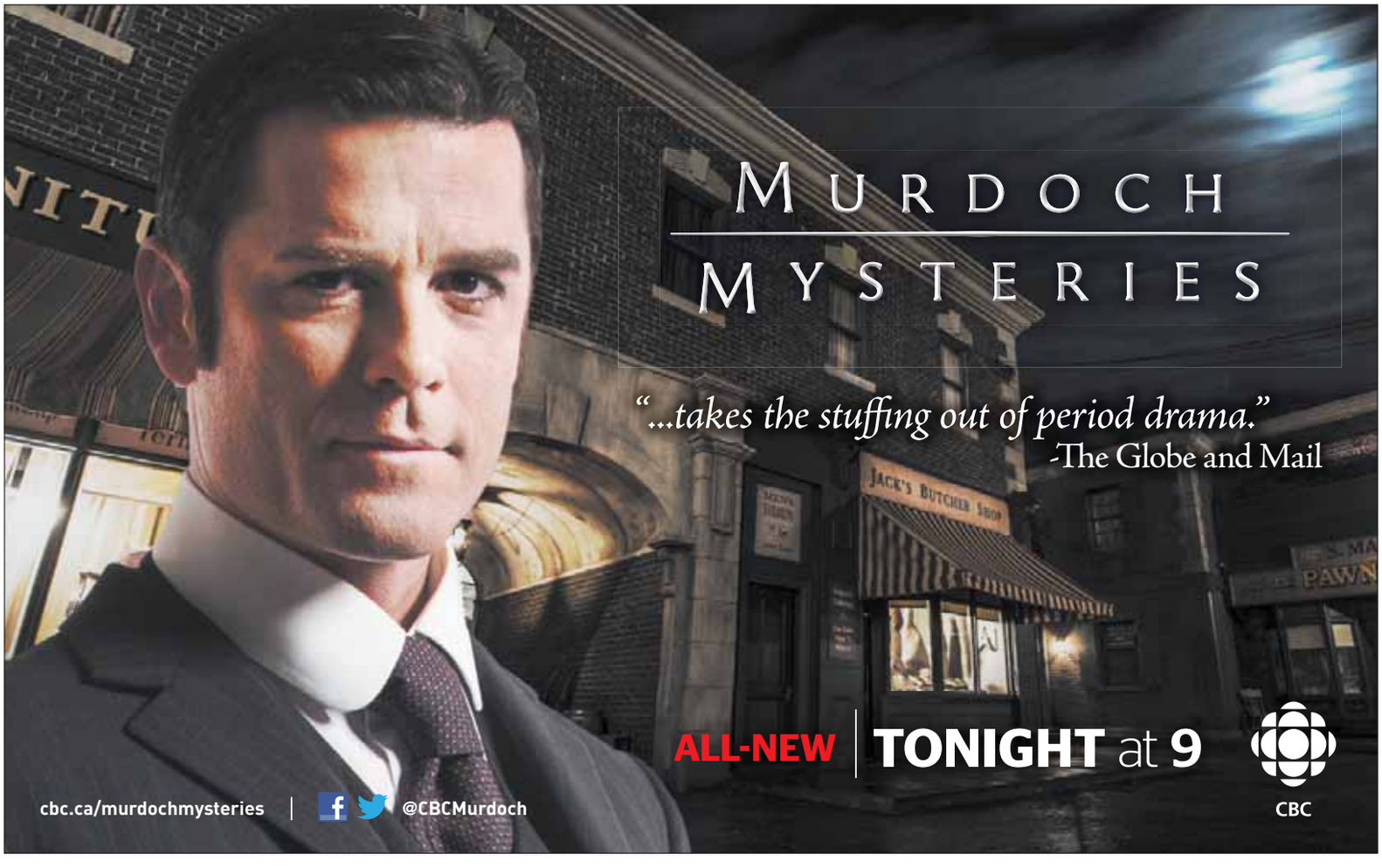
The stakes are high for the Wednesday unveiling, which many observers say will determine whether RIM survives to see the launch of another BlackBerry smartphone.

It has been a steep decline for RIM, which less than five years ago was the most valuable company in Canada, above Royal Bank. Affectionately called the CrackBerry maker, the mobile communications pioneer was Canada's crowning achievement of the technology sector.

At the height of its hype, the BlackBerry device was splashed across television shows and movies, while then-presidential candidate Barack Obama proclaimed he was a BlackBerry faithful during his first run at the White House.

Nowadays, when observers go through a litany of instances when the company stumbled, they point to everything from RIM underestimating the iPhone's potential; to its leaders being distracted by the possibilities that success brought them; to technical problems including a worldwide four-day outage in October 2011; to the failed launch of the PlayBook, RIM's answer to Apple's iPad. They also mention the blow to RIM's reputation caused by the delay of its next-generation BlackBerrys, which were seen as the company's best hope to maintain market share against Apple and Android devices. The devices' planned release was pushed into 2012, then delayed again throughout last year.

When the BlackBerry 10 smartphones and operating system are finally showcased to the world this Wednesday, a new chapter in RIM's history will begin. THE CANADIAN PRESS



HOW TO TAKE A POWDER AND SKI ANOTHER DAY

URBAN COMPASS
Paul Sullivan
vancouver@metronews.ca

Let's keep this in perspective.

You have a better chance of dying from driving to go backcountry skiing than you do from getting caught in an avalanche while backcountry skiing.

Skiingthebackcountry.com puts the risk of dying while driving at .022 per cent, compared to .018 per cent skiing in avalanche country.

Driving is dangerous, but we all do it. Backcountry skiing is dangerous, and we don't all do it because we can't.

It's not really a surprise that of the 150 backcountry skiers who die every year worldwide, 90 per cent are young men between 20 and 40, median age 33. Young, strong and capable of getting into serious trouble.

It's important to understand that not every backcountry avalanche victim is an inexperienced or careless newbie. Just last February, three skiers killed in Stevens Pass, just south of here in the Cascades, were some of the most skilled, experienced backcountry pros in the business.

One of them, Jim Jack, was the head judge of the Freeskiing World Tour. Another, Chris Rudolph, was the "director of marketing, culture and stoke" at Stevens Pass. This was his home track, and each of the victims had skied the area hundreds of times.

But the avalanche danger in the area was "considerable to high," after two feet of snow had fallen in 24 hours. Still, the dozen skiers who went out that day were veterans — pros who knew the ropes. And when the avalanche came, they were buried in 20 feet of snow.

No-bunny zone

Facts don't seem to cut any, er, ice with backcountry skiers. The lure of moron-free fresh powder is impossible to resist, even if an avalanche is not just likely but inevitable.

Three-quarters of the people who die in avalanches are seasoned skiers, and 90 per cent of avalanches are triggered by the victims.

So knowledge is not power when it comes to avalanches. The more experienced you are, the more at risk you appear to be, at least according to the statistics.

But facts don't seem to cut any, er, ice with backcountry skiers. The lure of moron-free fresh powder is impossible to resist, even if an avalanche is not just likely but inevitable.

If you insist in succumbing to the call of the backcountry wild, there is one more statistic you should know about: Avalanche airbags are said to reduce the chance of dying in an avalanche from 35 per cent to 1.3 per cent when successfully deployed. They cost about $1,000, but one of the skiers at Stevens Pass, Elyse Saugstad, believes that her airbag prevented her from being buried.

They may be expensive and they may not be cool, but I for one would see an airbag as essential equipment, right up there with the skis and the cool, lopsided grin.

Or, the always-available alternative, you could just stay in bounds with the bunnies and live.

My 'Knit'tle Ponies take centre stage

ROB MCDOUGALL/VISITSCOTLAND.COM

Scottish heritage

Ponies in jumpers promote Scotland

Scotland is experiencing rather cold, wintry weather as of late, and the locals are certainly dressing for it.

Shetland ponies Fivla, left, and Vitamin are donning traditional Fair Isle-style cardigans for a new advertising campaign championing the natural side of Scotland — the country's knits and farming communities.

METRO

Animal centre's viewpoint

"It was perhaps an odd request to get the ponies in Fair Isle (clothes), and a bit silly, but they were perfectly happy. Hopefully, these pictures will make people smile."

Jo Tonkinson, co-owner of Thordale Shetland Driving Centre, where Fivla (17 years old) and Vitamin (18 years old) are reared

It is believed that the ponies are related to the ancient Scandinavian ponies from when the islands were joined with Scandinavia (up until 8,000 BC).

Pony promotion power

'Iconic' animals draw attention of the world

Why use the diminutive horse to promote Scotland?

"The ponies are iconic around the world," said Amy Robertson, a spokeswoman from Visit Scotland.

"With Shetland wool and knitwear being so in demand, it seemed like a fun way to celebrate Shetland's natural landscapes, products and heritage."

METRO

Shetland Islands

- **Birdwatchers' paradise:** Home to around 200,000 puffins.
- **Life's a beach in Shetland:** Boasts 138 sandy beaches.
- **Vikings' fire fest:** Up Helly Aa is Europe's largest fire festival. Featuring a torch-lit procession, the annual festivities culminate in the burning of a replica Viking long ship that is then put out to sea.

Soldier games

Off-duty Harry plays butler to squad

Prince Harry's off-duty time in Afghanistan appeared to be full of war movies, board games and elaborate candy trades.

The 28-year-old helicopter pilot and fellow members of his squad swapped Kit Kats and Rice Krispies Squares for American soldiers' M&Ms, according to a British media pool report released Sunday.

Harry himself outlined one of his less-prestigious duties. He said anyone who lost at Uckers — a military game similar to Ludo or Parcheesi — had to then wait on his comrades like a Buckingham Palace butler, ready with a fresh cup of tea whenever anyone rang their bell.

Harry returned to Britain on Wednesday after a 20-week deployment in Afghanistan in which he acknowledged that he had targeted Taliban fighters from the cockpit of his Apache attack helicopter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Does online dating lead to less passionate relationships?

Twitter

@christyclarkbc: Congrats Premier @Kathleen_Wynne. Canada has more women leading provinces & territories than ever.

@Oprah: Farewell Vancouver I loved being with you all at Rogers Arena. Clean city. Great people. Was big Fun. Thank you! Thank you!

@andreareimer: Brought up to dislike Liberals & Ontario, I have to respect a party & a province that elect a WYSIWYG gay woman Premier

@URB_Planning: is the Vancouver Post Office declared heritage? It would be a shame to see significant change to the facade.

@MayorGregor: Thanks @Oprah for coming to #Vancouver and giving props for our clean streets and green rooftops!

@__Jim_Watts: Only in the Vancouver would ugly 1950's buildings be considered heritage. Bring on the dynamite.

metro

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Hollywood

Abrams vows to make Star Wars fans proud

J.J. Abrams calls getting assigned to direct the seventh live-action Star Wars film "as surreal as it is exciting."

The director-producer-writer spoke with a handful of media outlets on the red carpet before darting into the Producers Guild Awards on Saturday night. Abrams was there to accept the Norman Lear Achievement Award for such television works as Felicity (1998 to 2002), Alias (2001 to 2006), Lost (2004 to 2010), Fringe (20082013) as well as the current series Person of Interest and Revolution.

Abrams also is proving to be a go-to director of successful new films for long-established franchises, such as Star Trek and Mission: Impossible.

Last week, Lucasfilm officially announced Abrams' hiring for Star Wars: Episode VII, which has a tentative release date of 2015. Star Wars creator George Lucas personally endorsed Abrams in a statement: "I've consistently been impressed with J.J. as a filmmaker and storyteller. He's an ideal choice to direct the new Star Wars film and the legacy couldn't be in better hands."

As for Abrams' plans for Episode VII? "You know, obviously, it's so early," he replied. "I can just say what I want to do: I want to do the fans proud. I want to make sure the story is something that touches people. And we're just getting started. I'm very excited."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rob Corddry says he could play the best friend role in romantic comedies for the rest of his life. HANDOUT

Whose line is it anyway?

Warm Bodies.
Rob Corddry is the best friend of few words in this zom com that required some improv-muscle flexing

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

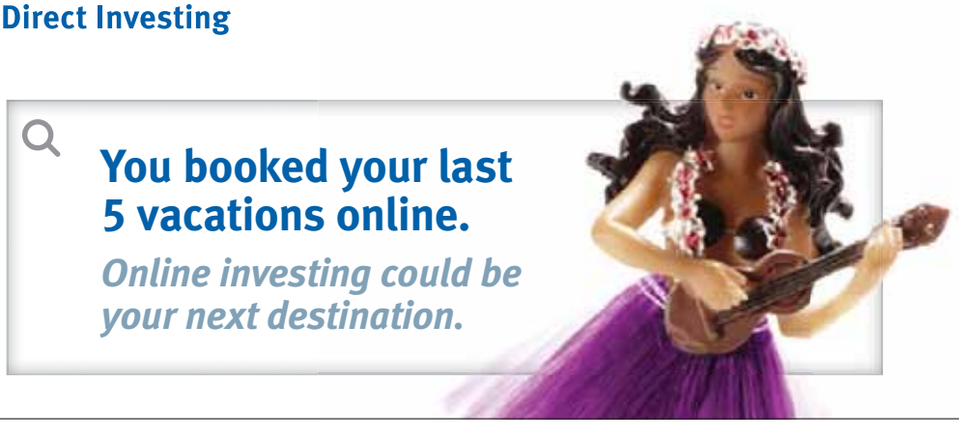
Rob Corddry is more than happy playing the best friend in romantic comedies, especially if it involves being a flesh-eating zombie. For Warm Bodies, he takes on the task of dispensing romantic advice to his love-lorn pal (Nicholas Hoult) without the help of verbal communication.

In the romantic comedy world, the best friend character is a pretty familiar role. How different is it when you only have four or five actual words of dialogue in the entire movie?
Before I auditioned for this, somebody said, "Are you sick of playing best friends all the time?" And I was like, "No." I wouldn't play the same one over and over again, but I would play shades of that stock character for the rest of my life. Because it's got everything, you know what I mean? You're often the comic relief, you have your own moments — usually, in good ones, in good stories — you have your own either comeuppance or realization. But this one is like, it doesn't get much of a different shade of that character than this, so it was even more attractive to me.

Your bar "conversation" with Nicholas, with no words, was great. I think I've seen improv exercises like that.
Oh God. Yeah, I've suffered through some myself. This sounds like a brag, but it's very funny, actually. I pitched that conversation taking place at an airport bar, and (director) Jonathan (Levine) was like, "That's actually a good idea." We were at dinner or something and he got on the phone. I'd forgotten about it, and then about 10 minutes later he goes, "They're going to see if they can build the airport bar. I like that idea. By the way, that's a $25,000 idea. You just cost the production $25,000 with this whim!"

How much of a challenge is improvising without the use of words?
I didn't find it a different challenge. Improv should only be a tool and not something that you abuse willy-nilly. Because if you're doing a script, it's because you really like the script and you like the words, and it's not yours to, like, make better somehow. As a matter of fact, I was never the fastest improviser on my team or whatever. But I was young, so I just thought I was bad. I wish I were doing it now, because you recognize it's like a team and everybody's got their job to do. It's like Moneyball, but for improv.

RBC Direct Investing



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GAMING IS GOOD FOR YOU!

Playing video games increases perception, improves precision skills and enables faster decision-making.

PERCEPTION
Playing games improves perceiving fine contrast differences by 58 per cent.
58%
PAIN RELIEF
Pain ratings decreased by 30 to 50 per cent among gamers.
30-50%
ACCURACY
Gamers make 37 per cent fewer errors than others.
37%
SPEED
Surgeons who play video games are 27 per cent faster.
27%
DECISION
Average video gamers make decisions 25 per cent faster than others with the same accuracy.
25%
MOTOR SKILLS
Pre-schoolers who play games improve their motor skills by 12 per cent.
12%
62% OF GAMERS PLAY WITH OTHER PEOPLE
47% OF PLAYERS ARE WOMEN
33% PLAY GAMES ON THEIR SMARTPHONES
32% OF GAMERS ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE
DECISIONS + ACTIONS PER SECOND
PAYING ATTENTION TO MORE THINGS AT ONCE
HARDCORE GAMERS
NON-GAMERS
30 is the average age of the average game player, who has been playing games for 12 years.
18 is the average amount of hours spent playing games per week.
35-year-olds purchase the most games.
HIGH-SCORING GAMES
The best Starcraft II players perform up to 400 actions per minute.
Playing one hour of Wii Zumba Fitness burns 500-700 calories.
5.9 million years – the collective amount of time spent on gaming by World of Warcraft players.
GAMES AND VIOLENCE
The rise in games' popularity does not correlate with an increase in juvenile violent crimes. Between 1995 and 2009, video game sales increased by 500 per cent and juvenile crime rates declined by 46 per cent.
Games sales, USA in billions
Juvenile arrest rates for violent crime per 100,000 people
1995
2000
2005
2009

TEXT: DANIEL DENISIUK, GRAPHIC: MIA KORAB, MVN

SOURCES: INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE ASSOCIATION (ESA); UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK; CHARLES UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE; CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY; MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY; WALL STREET JOURNAL

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Top games that will make your year

Clash of the titles. Console junkies rejoice as Metro delivers the cream of the gaming crop for 2013

LAWRENCE BONK
Metro World News in New York

The Last of Us is said to be a video game version of the film The Road. HANDOUT

Well, we survived the Mayan apocalypse, so we may as well start to figure out what video games we'll be spending our money on this year. Here is a small sampling of some of the more exciting titles that will be dropping soon.

Ni No Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch
System: PS3
Release Date: Jan. 24
This beautiful RPG, designed by the same animation studio that brought Spirited Away and Princess Mononoke to movie theatres, has been a long time coming. Look for an expansive world to explore, outstanding visuals and a cast of memorable characters when it launches later this month.

Last of Us
System: PS3
Release Date: May 7
Uncharted and its two sequels are among the best looking and best playing games on the PS3. The company that created Nathan and Sully are back, this time trading in treasure hunting for, um, surviving a horrendous apocalypse. Early reports indicate this title looks and plays great, with people likening it to a video game version of Cormac McCarthy's The Road.

Pikmin 3
System: Wii U
Release Date: Spring
It's been nine years since Captain Olimar and his lovable Pikmin have graced a video game console. What to expect with this new instalment? More of the same strategy and exploration you know and love, this time with an HD coat of paint. All of the Pikmin will fight and die at your hand!

PS4/Xbox 720
Neither of these next-gen consoles have been officially unveiled, but the rumour mill is crunching so hard it's about to break. In any event, all will be revealed by May's E3 expo. Our guess? The Xbox will be available in time for Christmas but the PS4 will lag until next year.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Liberty Ross

Liberty Ross files for divorce

Liberty Ross has filed for divorce from director Rupert Sanders after 10 years of marriage and in the wake of his highly publicized affair with his Snow White and the Huntsman star, Kristen Stewart, according to Us Weekly.

"This was a long time coming," one source says, explaining that Sanders "did want to try to repair the relationship and didn't want a divorce." But according to another source, Ross found the betrayal impossible to get past. "They gave it a shot for the kids (but) she was just so angry," the source says. "She's the kind of person who wouldn't really ever get over it." The couple has two children, daughter Skyla, 7, and son Tennyson, 5.

'All is good' between Stewart and Pattinson

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson, meanwhile, are reportedly doing just fine, despite his being in Australia shooting a new movie and tabloid reports speculating that a split between the Twilight co-stars is imminent.

"All is good," a source tells E! News, adding that Stewart is "not concerned" and "he isn't either" about their temporary separation. "She still plans on going to visit him at some point while he is there filming, but definitely not now," the source says.

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson

The Word

Is this the set list for Beyoncé's Super Bowl XLVII halftime show?

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Poor Beyoncé — can she keep anything under wraps? First her cover was blown about lip-syncing at the presidential inauguration by a member of the Marine Corp Band (loose lips sink ships — and egos) and now someone has leaked her possible set list for her Super Bowl XLVII halftime show.

According to Us Weekly, the set will start out with just Beyoncé singing her solo hit, Crazy in Love, and then she'll be joined on stage with her Destiny's Child mates Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams for Bills, Bills, Bills and Survivor. They'll then wrap up the performance with their new single, Nuclear.

The only way this reunion will be complete is if Tina Knowles comes back on board with her match-matchy, cheapo costumes she used to design for the girls. Make it happen, universe!

Burt Reynolds

Reynolds and his moustache are in the hospital

Burt Reynolds has been hospitalized with the flu and is being treated in a Florida intensive care unit, a rep for the 76-year-old actor confirms to E! News.

"He is doing better. They are taking care of him and his moustache," his rep jokes. "His fever is down and we believe he should be taken out of ICU very soon."

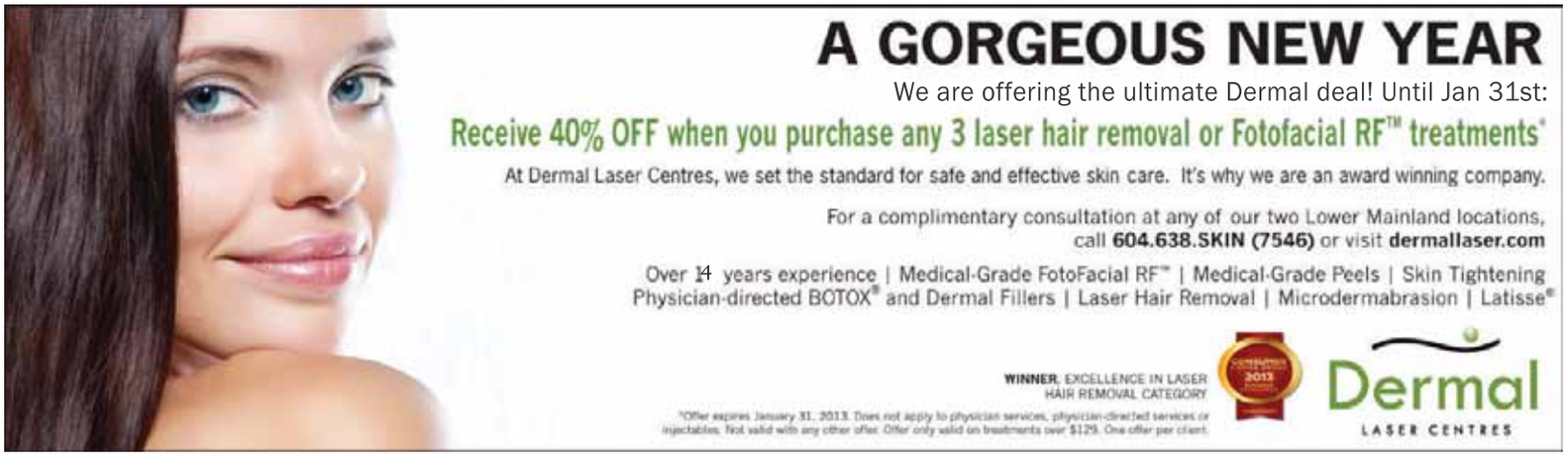
Twitter

@EvaLongoria
OMG 5 million followers! When did that happen?! Thx tweeples! I love u!

@chriscolfer
Just finished a chapter in TLOS2 where the twins meet Cinderella's Stepmother. It's very Grey Gardens meets Whatever Happened To Baby Jane.

@hughhefner
I hope everyone is enjoying the weekend. I will be working on my scrapbook this afternoon.

@oliviawilde
Kate Moss says "nothing tastes as good as skinny feels"? Huh. I'm pretty sure that's because you live in England, dude.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Travel Tidbit

Start budgeting before you book

IT'S ALL RELATIVE
Kathy Buckworth,
kathybuckworth.com

A Thomas Cook travel survey reveals that 77 per cent of Canadians plan to travel in 2013. This, despite the fact that many of them say they have to cut down on other expenditures in order to afford it.

Setting up a budget that includes saving for a trip can be tough. Start with deciding realistically where you want to go, how you'll get there, what you want to do and ultimately how much it will cost. It can be easy to research this information on the Internet or work with an accredited travel agent.

Allow for a 10 per cent differential due to changing fuel and other variable costs, and remember to take into account "busy season" rates, depending on when and where you're travelling.

Once you have your target cost, look for areas in your current spending where you can save. For example, 61 per cent of families surveyed said they would eat out less to save toward their vacation.

Cutting back on entertainment and other leisure activities can contribute to your vacation account. Set up a separate bank account (find a no-fee one) to start banking your bucks for a well-needed family getaway. **KATHY BUCKWORTH IS AN AWARD WINNING WRITER. VISIT KATHYBUCKWORTH.COM OR FOLLOW KATHY ON TWITTER @ KATHYBUCKWORTH.**

Exclusively online

- Who knew that Mommy's most significant parenting feat thus far would be finding you a sippy cup that actually functions properly. Follow along with the comedic (mis)adventures of mommyhood online at metronews.ca/voices

Keeping Fido toasty

Protecting Pets. Take precautions to keep dogs and cats safe as winter settles in

Dogs and cats can be somewhat insulated, but in frigid temperatures, pet owners need to take extra measures in protecting them. THE CANADIAN PRESS/GRAEME ROY

Don't let the fur fool you.

Dogs and cats can be somewhat insulated by their warm-feeling coats, but in the face of frigid temperatures, pet owners need to take extra measures in protecting Fluffy and Fido.

Assessing how long to let pets stay outdoors should be based on numerous factors including the animal's breed, coat type, general health and age, according to an online article originally published in 2010 by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

Determining whether the pet has been acclimated to colder weather and its desire to spent time outdoors should also be considered, the association wrote.

"If you like to let your cat out in the backyard, let's say, to roam around on your own property for a short period of time, you should be supervising your animal in a cold weather environment," said Ontario SPCA inspector Paul Harrison.

If an animal is left outside unsupervised and snow, sleet or rain develops, it won't be able to hold its body temperature without proper shelter to take refuge in, he noted.

If a dog is kept outside in the backyard, Harrison said owners should ensure the shelter is raised above the ground and is well-insulated with shingles. The door should be facing away from prevailing wind.

It's also key to check that an animal's water supply hasn't been frozen and is housed in a non-spillable dish, with the option to consider purchasing a heated water bowl, he added.

Koryn Greenspan, owner of Toronto-based Urban Dog Walks, believes in the BBC acronym for winter pet protection: booties, balms and coats.

Greenspan said her pooch, Georgia, is "very finicky" when salt gets into her front paws. Prior to taking her German shepherd-husky-collie mix outdoors, Greenspan tries to ensure her pet stays calm as she applies protective balm on Georgia's paws. "You just want to always instil trust and comfort because it's uncomfortable for the dogs at first to have their paws handled in that way."

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association suggests trimming excess hair from between a pet's toes, where it tends to trap salt. Ensure any residual salt is rinsed off or removed with a damp cloth and fully dried back at home. Coating the hair between the undersides of the toes with a thin layer of petroleum jelly can help to repel the ice, the association wrote. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Blackberries and toddlers

There are a few similarities:

1. Mothers joke about how the only time they get to themselves is in the bathroom. This is a complete lie. The peaceful, private utopia usually lasts for only about 3.7 seconds, since both the toddler and the BB inevitably choose the most inopportune moment to interrupt with a whine, yell, thump, or buzz.

2. You've answered all the questions, soothed all the fears, and have powered down everybody and everything for the night. NOT. As soon as you slip into that blissful and necessary deep sleep, you will be awakened by the sound of whining. In this circumstance, the electronic toddler has one clear advantage: There have been no reported cases of a BB oozing out any liquids that require immediate clean up.

3. If they're quiet, you're constantly checking them to make sure everything is OK. If they're loud and interrupting, you just want them to shut up and go away.

4. You love them. You hate them. They drive you crazy when they're "on" and look adorable when they're sleeping. **FROM THE BLACKBERRY DIARIES: ADVENTURES IN MODERN MOTHERHOOD©. COPYRIGHT © 2009 BY KATHY BUCKWORTH. PUBLISHED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH KEY PORTER BOOKS.**

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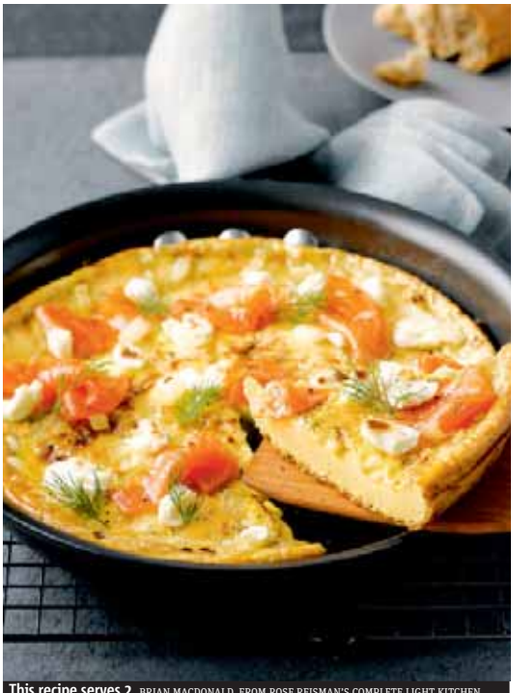

This recipe serves 2. BRIAN MACDONALD, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

This Frittata with Smoked Salmon, Cream Cheese and Dill is a light and healthy alternative to lox and cream cheese on a bagel.

Serve it alongside whole grain toast or an English muffin for a complete meal.

Smoked salmon freezes well and will keep in the refrigerator for up to one week.

1. Lightly coat a small non-stick skillet with vegetable oil spray. Heat the oil over medium heat and sauté the onion and garlic for 3 minutes, or until the onion is tender and lightly browned. Remove from the heat and set aside.

2. Whisk the egg substitute, egg whites, milk, salt and pepper together. Add the onion mixture.

3. Spray a clean 10-inch skillet with vegetable oil, add the egg mixture and cook for 4 minutes, or until nearly set.

4. Dot the cream cheese overtop, cover and cook until the frittata is set, 2 minutes. Sprinkle with the dill and smoked salmon. Slip frittata onto serving platter with spatula.

5. Cut into wedges and serve immediately. **ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN**

Ingredients

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup finely diced onion
- 1/2 tsp crushed fresh garlic
- 1/2 cup egg substitute (or 2 large eggs)
- 3 egg whites
- 1/3 cup low-fat milk
- pinch salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp low-fat cream cheese, softened
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh dill
- 1/4 cup diced smoked salmon

Healthy eating

Choose it and lose it

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
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Swiss Chalet, aside from its delicious "jus" and chicken dinners, is known for other options. However, some of those options will pack on the calories.

Swiss Chalet Poutine

910 calories / 50 g fat
Just the name "poutine" can clog your arteries: French fries, cheese curds and gravy. With three quarters of your daily calories and fat, there's no room for any nutrition!

Equivalent

One Swiss Chalet Poutine is equal in calories to a 1 1/4 lb flank steak.

Swiss Chalet Classic Hot Chicken Sandwich (with white meat)

520 calories / 11 g fat
This is a more nutritious meal with lean protein and little fat.

Don't get taken while you type

Social snakes. The Net can be an impressive tool for self-promotion, but watch out for those info-snatchers

Familiarize yourself with your social network's privacy settings to help control who can see your information. ISTOCK

Sharing pictures and information online through social networks has become a normal way of life for tech-savvy millennials.

Unfortunately, some technology experts are concerned that young people's sharing can go too far, putting their security at risk.

A recent survey by Visa Canada found that young Canadians, aged 18 to 30, were the most likely age group to overshare personal information on social networking sites, including posting their home addresses, birth dates and phone numbers online — information that could potentially be used to carry out identity theft and other scams.

What's more, it appears this willingness to share extends into the offline world. The same survey also found that young adults are most likely to share their PIN and lend their credit or debit card to others.

Security experts are chiming in to urge Canada's young people to show some restraint to avoid putting their personal financial information at risk.

"Young adults need to better understand the risks associated with oversharing personal and financial data," says Gord Jamieson, the head of security at Visa Canada.

"The more information you post, the more likely a thief will have enough information to access your accounts and commit fraud."

Jamieson recommends young people, and all Canadians, remember these security tips before posting online:

- Personal information is just that — personal. Don't post information such as payment card info or your SIN in a public forum or on a social networking site.
- Pay close attention to what you share on social networking sites — even seemingly innocuous information such as your mother's maiden name or your high school mascot can help a thief gain access to your accounts.
- Create strong, unique passwords for each of your accounts. Using different passwords will limit any damage if one password is compromised.

NEWS CANADA

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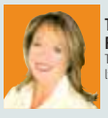
The In-Credibility Factor

Sonya Esman flew to England to help design jewelry after winning the #NokiaLVK Fashion Quest. PROVIDED

Name: Sonya Esman
City: Toronto
Age: 17
Occupation: Fashion blogger, YouTube vlogger and actress



THE IN-CREDIBILITY FACTOR
Teresa Kruze
life@metronews.ca

At only 17 years of age, Sonya has started to make her mark in the fashion world as a blogger, a regular contributor on YouTube and as an actress (Degrassi, Camp Rock 2, Rookie Blue). She recently beat out contestants from around the world to win the #NokiaLVK Fashion Quest.

Two weeks ago, she jetted off to London, England to collect the grand prize: a chance to design a piece of jewelry with designer Leila Kashanipour of LeiVanKash.

I knew I was on my way when ...

I knew I was on my way when I found out that I won the #NokiaLVK Fashion Quest. It felt surreal because Leila of LeiVanKash is someone I really look up to and she blew me away with her knowledge and experience.

We decided on a limited edition design of a pair of earrings featuring a druzy stone.

Everything I came to London for I put on a piece of paper.

It was my take, my favourite jewelry put into her designs.

I thought it was absolutely beautiful and it will be featured in her line. In the future, I want to keep video blogging and I want to build a brand that will hopefully develop into my own career and occupation.

Action Plan:

Keep practising your craft

Know what you want from your career or passion in life.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes and make good investments

If you're making YouTube videos, buy a good quality camera so it reflects in your work.

Network with other people and have mentors that can guide you

Do a lot of research because there are a lot of resources online that will help aspiring bloggers or YouTubers.

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Canucks can't reel in Sharks

NHL. San Jose maintains a perfect start to season and ends Vancouver's three game winning streak

On Sunday

Sharks	Canucks
4	1

Joe Pavelski knew the game was going to get intense. He didn't realize it would happen so early.

Pavelski had two goals, Patrick Marleau scored again — though only once — and the undefeated San Jose Sharks beat the Vancouver Canucks 4-1 on Sunday.

The game became feisty even before the puck dropped as Ryan Clowe and Alex Burrows got into it at centre ice and it remained that way.

"We know there is a lot of stake when we play them," Pavelski said. "The intensity was set ... I'd like to say at the first puck-drop but it was before that. That's the first time I've seen something like that."

Joe Thornton also scored for the Sharks, who improved to 5-0-0. Antti Niemi made 23 saves as coach Todd McLellan earned his 200th career victory.

"We were ready to go. I think that Clowie getting us going early was huge for us," Thornton said.

Marleau scored two goals in each of the first four games of the season, becoming the first NHL player to pull off that trick since 1917.

Burrows scored for the Canucks, who had a three-game unbeaten streak end. Cory Schneider also stopped 23 shots.

"We obviously dislike each other," Burrows said. "We've seen them in the playoffs a couple of years ago. They're a Western Conference rival and they make for good games."

Clowe tied a Sharks record with eight penalties, all in the first two periods, and a career-high 35 penalty minutes.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Jose Shark Patrick Marleau, right, battles for control of the puck with Vancouver Canuck Jason Garrison on Sunday in San Jose, Calif. THEARON W. HENDERSON/GETTY IMAGES

Peters aims to get 'back on track' with Caps

Jaime Peters, right, battles with Cesc Fabregas during a match between Ipswich Town and Arsenal in January 2011. JAMIE MCDONALD/GETTY IMAGES

Jaime Peters came to Vancouver hoping to "re-create" his soccer career.

The 25-year-old defender, specifically on right back, recently terminated his contract with Ipswich Town in the Football League Championship due to what he believed was a lack of playing time, and he has come to the Whitecaps training camp as a trialist.

It's an opportunity; nothing guaranteed.

The Whitecaps already have eight defenders on their roster, even with Friday's news that the Major League Soccer club had parted ways with Martin Bonjour.

And, ideally, eight is the number of defenders head coach Martin Rennie wants on his squad. So the odds of cracking the roster are stacked against Peters.

"He's got good experiences," said Rennie following a recent training session at Burnaby Lake West.

"He's still a young player but he's played at a good level and it's a good opportunity for us to look at him right now and see how he does."

But after being passed up for the Canadian men's national team training camp currently going on in the U.S., Peters — who has 26 International "A" appearances for Canada dating back to 2004 when he was 17 years old — simply wants the chance to stick with a club team.

"Obviously it's always good to come back to your family and friends and to get my football career back on track," said Peters, a native of Pickering, Ont.

The Whitecaps travel to Casa Grande, Ariz., Monday before returning home on Feb. 8.

While in Arizona, the Whitecaps will play two exhibition games — against the New England Revolution on Tuesday and the Houston Dynamo on Saturday. CAM TUCKER/METRO

4 SPORTS

Davis Cup

Canadians prep for clash with Spain

With their Davis Cup first-round tie against top-ranked Spain just days away, members of the Canadian tennis team will hold their first practice Monday.

Canada, which currently sits 12th in Davis Cup nations rankings, will host the Spanish contingent — minus Rafael Nadal and David Ferrer — at the Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Centre beginning Friday and concluding Sunday.

Expected to lead the Canadian side will be 22-year-old Milos Raonic, who comes into Vancouver as the No. 15-ranked men's singles player in the world.

He also has a record of 8-4 overall in Davis Cup competitions, including two wins and a loss in doubles.

With a win over Spain, Canada can advance to the World Group quarter-finals in April.

In December, Tennis Canada announced tickets for the event sold out in 80 minutes. METRO

WHL

Giants sink further over weekend

Back-to-back road losses to the Victoria Royals this weekend made it a six-game losing streak for the Vancouver Giants.

They remain last in the WHL standings with a record of 12-38-0-0.

The Giants lost 6-4 on Friday and 4-1 on Saturday.

Cain Franson, individually, had a good weekend for the Giants, scoring two goals and adding an assist. The 19-year-old centre is the Giants' leader in goals with 20. LIAM BRITTEN FOR METRO

AHL

Laing, Brust suiting up for all-star game

The Abbotsford Heat will have a pair of players in the AHL All-Star Classic Monday night.

Quintin Laing, 33, is a veteran of 379 career AHL regular-season games and will captain the Western Conference team in Providence, R.I.

He'll be joined by teammate Barry Brust, who in November set the new AHL record for the longest shutout streak at 268 minutes and 17 seconds.

Brust broke the 55-year-old mark of 249 minutes and 51 seconds, previously held by Hockey Hall of Famer Johnny Bower, who accomplished the feat in 1957 with the Cleveland Barons. METRO

Baltimore Ravens safety Bernard Pollard stretches on Thursday at the team's training facility. The Ravens face the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl XLVII in New Orleans on Sunday. PATRICK SEMANSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defences hope to be a hit come Sunday

Big-game lead-up. A pair of oft-penalized, hard-hitting defences are meeting in final

It was as if linebacker Ray Lewis, safety Bernard Pollard and the rest of the Baltimore Ravens defence set out to provide a quarter-by-quarter demonstration of how they do business.

About 11 minutes into the AFC championship game against Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, Lewis drew a 15-yard unnecessary roughness penalty for a helmet-to-helmet hit that pushed tight end Aaron Hernandez's chin strap up near his nose.

Then, in the second quarter, linebacker Dannell Ellerbe gave New England another free 15 yards by hitting an offensive lineman in the face mask in response to an after-the-play shove.

Fast-forward to early in the third, and Pollard was flagged for his team's third personal foul of the day, thanks to a leaping hit against the helmet of receiver Wes Welker. Two plays later, Welker dropped a third-down pass.

A couple of minutes into the fourth, Pollard struck again. No penalty was called, but his helmet-to-helmet hit on Stevan Ridley resulted in a fumble and left the running back on his back, looking limp and helpless. Ridley left the game with a head injury, while the Ravens recovered the football and were on their way to this Sunday's Super Bowl against the equally aggressive San Francisco 49ers.

In an age of high-powered offences in the NFL — this season's games featured 45.5 points, the highest average since 1965 — and more safety-conscious officials, two hard-hitting, oft-penalized defences are meeting in the final. Second-half shutouts of the Patriots and Atlanta Falcons in the conference title games were a reminder from the 49ers and Ravens that defence still matters.

Sometimes it isn't about some sort of newfangled, complicated Xs-and-Os defence, either. It's about players pushing it to the limit — and, sometimes, perhaps beyond — in a league taking steps to rein in certain kinds of hits.

"Being physical? That's vital, man. That's what we live by," Baltimore cornerback Cary Williams said.

What about San Francisco's defence?

"They're just as physical as we are," Williams replied, offering what in his mind is probably the highest compliment he could pay another team's players. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I'm not sitting here saying that we're intimidating everybody or anything like that. But you know we're coming to hit you, for sure."

Ravens linebacker Paul Kruger

Djokovic wins record 3rd straight Aussie open

No shirt ripping or bare-chested flexing this time.

Novak Djokovic completed his work before midnight, defeating Andy Murray in four sets for his third consecutive Australian Open title and fourth overall.

"Winning it three in a row, it's incredible," Djokovic said after his 6-7 (2), 7-6 (3), 6-3, 6-2 victory Sunday night. "It's very thrilling. I'm full of joy right now. It's going to give me a lot of confidence for the rest of the season, that's for sure."

Nine other men had won consecutive Australian titles in the Open era, but none three straight years.

A year ago, Djokovic began his season with an epic five-hour, 53-minute five-set win over Rafael Nadal at the Australian Open, the longest Grand Slam final. He tore off his shirt to celebrate. The TV replays repeated constantly at this tournament.

He mimicked that celebration after coming back to beat Stanislas Wawrinka in five hours in a surprisingly tough fourth-round victory this time.

Since then, he's looked every bit the No. 1 player. He said he played "perfectly" in his 89-minute win over fourth-seeded David Ferrer in the semifinals Thursday night. Murray struggled to beat 17-time major winner Roger Federer in five sets in the semifinals Friday night, and still had the bad blisters on his feet to show for it in the final.

Djokovic said he loves playing at Rod Laver Arena, where he won his first major title in 2008. He now has six Grand Slam titles altogether. Federer has won four of his 17 majors at Melbourne Park, and Andre Agassi is the only other player to have won that many in Australia since 1968.

Novak Djokovic celebrates his win Sunday at the Australian Open final in Melbourne. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women's final

Victoria Azarenka won her second consecutive Australian Open title on Saturday, beating Li Na 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a final that included a break for fireworks, two medical timeouts and a nasty fall to the court by Li.

- Azarenka, who broke down in tears and sobbed into her towel when the match ended, won her second major title and retained the No. 1 ranking.

Murray broke the 76-year drought for British men at the majors when he won the U.S. Open last year and said he'll leave Melbourne slightly more upbeat than he has after defeats here in previous years.

"The last few months have been the best tennis of my life. I mean, I made Wimbledon final, won the Olympics, won the U.S. Open. You know, I was close here as well," he said. "No one's ever won a slam (immediately) after winning their first one. It's not the easiest thing to do. And I got extremely close." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Golf. Woods leading pack at Farmers Insurance Open

The fog lifted Sunday and revealed a familiar sight: Tiger Woods in command at Torrey Pines.

Despite finishing with a bogey on the easiest hole of the back nine, Woods began to pull away from the field with a 3-under 69 in the third round to build a four-shot lead in the Farmers Insurance Open. Woods has only lost twice on the PGA Tour in 40 previous times that he has held the outright lead through 54 holes.

Because fog wiped out all of Saturday, players were going as long as daylight allowed before returning Monday to complete the tournament. Woods, who was at 14-under 202, was likely to get in about six holes before darkness, and he didn't bother switching to a red shirt for the start of the final round.

Brad Fritsch, a PGA Tour rookie from Ottawa, had a 70 and was at 206. Erik Compton finished birdie-eagle for a 71 and was alone in third, five shots behind.

Asked about trying to chase Woods, Compton started laughing.

"I'm trying to chase myself," he said.

Woods has won seven times at Torrey Pines as a pro, including a U.S. Open, and another win Monday would give him the most wins on any course. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tiger Woods lines up a putt on the sixth hole on Sunday at Torrey Pines in San Diego. GETTY IMAGES

Hard day for Hadwin

Abbotsford's Adam Hadwin began the final round in contention, sitting tied for fifth at eight-under par. A top-10 finish and Hadwin would've qualified for next week's Waste Management Phoenix Open.

- Hadwin, who qualified for the tournament on Monday, got into trouble with bogeys on three of his first four holes to start his round and was at 12-over par after 15 holes when play was suspended due to darkness. Hadwin will begin play Monday tied for 83rd. METRO

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

Aries
March 21 - April 20
Focus on the things that are going well for you rather than the things that are going wrong. Financially and affectionately you have much to look forward to, so be positive and before long positive things will occur.

Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You won't be able to hide your feelings over the next seven days – and nor should you want to. You will be much more outgoing and much more likely to tell others what you really think of them!

Gemini
May 22 - June 21
No matter how reserved emotionally you may be most of the time now you must go right the other way and leave those you love in no doubt how you feel about them. A hug and a kiss is always the best remedy.

Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You will find it easier to get along with authority figures as the new week begins. There will still be disagreements, of course, but at least you will be thinking along the same lines and pulling in the same direction.

Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
The most important thing this coming week is that you keep a sense of perspective and remember that no matter how much you want to get ahead in the world personal relationships matter more. Love is the key.

Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may be bored by what you are working on at the moment but the planets indicate that if you make a good job of it you will be rewarded with more enjoyable tasks in the future. Pretend that it's fun.

Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Love will come back into your life this week and it won't be long before you feel in tune with the world again. Don't wait for loved ones to tell you how much they care – tell them how much you care first.

Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Not even a Scorpio can keep moving at your present pace, so slow down and give yourself a break – yes, you CAN afford the time. If you fall behind in your schedule it means your schedule is too tough.

Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You have beaten off some serious challenges to your authority. Well done! Now you must find ways to get back in the good books of someone you fell out with along the way. What can you do to win them round?

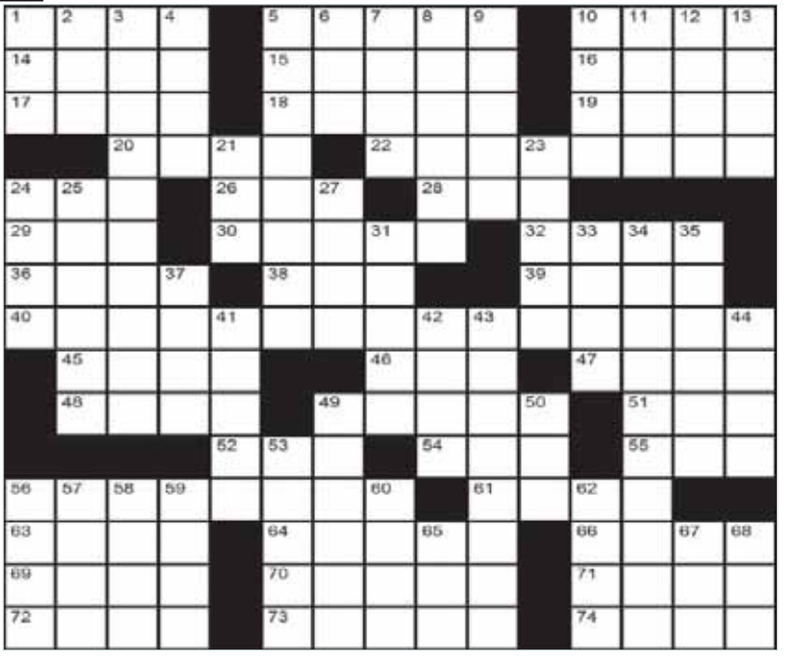
Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you make an effort to see things from someone else's point of view today you will gain a valuable insight into why they think the way they do. Once you understand them you won't feel so threatened.

Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Changes of one sort or another are inevitable over the coming week but that's a good thing, so don't hide yourself away from the world. The Sun in your sign will motivate you to make those changes work for you.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will be pleasantly surprised by what happens over the next few days. Money matters will no longer worry you the way they once did and relationships and friendships will be a lot of fun. It's all good. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

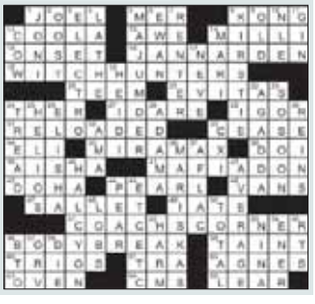
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. BC-mined stone
5. __ Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands, formerly)
10. Canadian actor Eugene
14. Single-named supermodel
15. Ms. Lavigne
16. Nabisco cookie
17. __ McMurray, AB
18. Poetry
19. Intellect
20. Actress Ms. Russell
22. Canadian country singer, Crystal __
24. Camera mugger
26. PEI part, for short
28. Author Ms. LeShan
29. Ms. Longoria
30. London, England's tallest building, The __
32. "__ and Dumber" (1994)
36. Net balls
38. Canadian broadcaster Mr. Lewis
39. Duelling weapon
40. Chief Correspondent of CBC's "The National": 2 wds.
45. "Finding __" (2003)
46. 'S' of RSVP
47. Priory of __, in "The Da Vinci Code" (2006)
48. The real thing, for short
49. Premiere
51. Whichever
52. 'Jag' add-on (Posh car)
54. Beaufort __
55. "Who Wants to __ _ Millionaire"
56. PM's official res. at 24: 2 wds.
61. Jodie Foster movie
63. "Charmed" sister
64. Lyre-playing Muse
66. De-squeaks
69. Stuff
70. Roman Myth: Romulus' twin brother
71. Footprint
72. Pas __ (Solo ballet dance)
73. Metalwork tool
74. Better Than __ (Rock band)

Down
1. Peanut butter brand
2. "La Isla Bonita" line: "Te dijo te __."
3. Universe stuff, in Cosmology: 2 wds.
4. Duck, in Dusseldorf
5. Dickensian Miss of Satis House
6. Ottawa's Carling, e.g.
7. Flawed goods, for short
8. Shared juicy news
9. Follow _ __ (Sleuth)
10. Toronto's Casa
11. "__ Brockovich" (2000)
12. Hawk
13. George Lucas character
21. Belonging to Providence's li'l state
23. Flamingo, for one
24. Beatles movie!
25. Jennifer Aniston is the new face of this skincare brand
27. Eruption's emission
31. Shampooing direction
33. Neil Sedaka's "Breaking __ Hard to Do": 2 wds.
34. Star's in-promotion-mode undertaking: 2 wds.
35. "Scram!"
37. __-sweet chocolate
41. Scoundrel
42. The Baldwins, e.g.
43. Dime schooner
44. Irish singer
49. 'Celebrity Rehab' physician: 2 wds.
50. __ kwon do
53. Lumberjacks
56. Beach lotions' 15 and 30, e.g.
57. "Ugly Betty" actor Michael
58. U.S.S. Enterprise navigator
59. Real estate verb
60. Avatar of Vishnu
62. Misplace
65. Strong boat
67. Celtic sea god
68. Pampering resort

Friday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	6		5		2			3
				6		8		4
				9		6	1	
	9						3	8
			9		8			
1	3						7	
	8	6		4				
9		3		5				
2			7		9		8	

Friday's Sudoku

8	5	4	2	3	9	6	1	7
9	3	7	8	1	6	4	5	2
6	2	1	7	5	4	9	3	8
7	9	8	4	2	5	3	6	1
3	1	5	6	9	7	2	8	4
2	4	6	3	8	1	7	9	5
1	8	2	9	4	3	5	7	6
5	7	9	1	6	2	8	4	3
4	6	3	5	7	8	1	2	9

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MSRP $1299

SALE PRICE **$999**

FRIGIDAIRE

1.6 Cu. Ft. Over-The-Range Microwave

Model: CPMV162LM
Color: Silver Mist

MSRP $399

CLEARANCE **$199**

GE

Full Console Portable Dishwasher

Model: GSC20600WW
Color: White

MSRP $599

SALE PRICE **$499**

Danby

18" Full Console Dishwasher

Model: DDW1809W
Color: White

MSRP $399

SALE PRICED **$299**

Danby

9.2 Cu. Ft. Bottom Freezer Mid-Size Refrigerator

Model: DPF261
Dimensions: 23.8" W x 55.8" H x 26.7" D
Color: White or Stainless Steel

MSRP $599

SALE PRICE **$499**

Danby

8.8 Cu. Ft. Counter-Depth Top Freezer Refrigerator

Model: DFF883W
Dimensions: 22" W x 61.3" H x 22.8" D
Color: White

** Only 10 Available **

MSRP $499

SALE PRICED **$299**

SAMSUNG

31.6 Cu. Ft. French Door Refrigerator

Model: RF323TEDBSR
Dimensions: 35.75" W x 70" H x 37.75" D
Color: Stainless Steel

MSRP $3599

SALE PRICED **$2999** AND WE'LL ALSO PAY THE TAX!

SAMSUNG

22 Cu. Ft. Bottom Freezer Refrigerator

Model: RL220
Dimensions: 29.8" W x 69.4" H x 34" D

MSRP $1499

STAINLESS STEEL **$1399**

Subtract $100 for White or Black

DeLonghi

36" Double Oven Gas Range

Model: CFSGD30
Color: Stainless Steel

SALE PRICE **$2899**

DeLonghi

24" Gas Cooktop

Model: CCT624
Color: Stainless Steel

MSRP $899

SALE PRICE **$799**

DeLonghi

24" Wall Oven (Gas or Electric)

Model: CB624 or CE624
Color: Stainless Steel

GAS SALE PRICE **$1499**

ELECTRIC SALE PRICE **$1599**

DeLonghi

30" Dual Fuel Range w/ 17,000 BTU Burner

Model: DEF5GE304CSS
Color: Stainless Steel

BUY THIS RANGE & GET A FREE HOOD

MSRP $3299

SALE PRICE **$2299**

SAMSUNG

24" Dishwasher with Stainless Steel Interior

Model: DW70G3LBAWW
Color: White

WHITE ONLY **$499**

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GE

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Model: JGB307DETWW
Color: White

SALE PRICE **$479**

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